

1308

SPEECH

93

OF

HON. JOHN H. SAVAGE, OF TENNESSEE,

ON THE

OLD SOLDIERS' PENSION BILL;

DELIVERED

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, DECEMBER 16, 1858.

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REPORT

JOHN R. BAYLOR OF TENNESSEE

OF THE SENATE, SENATOR BAYLOR

REPORT

THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE

REPORT TO THE SENATE OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE  
BY JOHN R. BAYLOR



## S P E E C H.

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The House having resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, and proceeded to the consideration of the bill granting pensions to the soldiers of the war with Great Britain of 1812, and those engaged in Indian wars during that period—

Mr. SAVAGE said:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I have anticipated all that has occurred in regard to this bill. Every great cause has been opposed without regard to its merits. Indeed, persecution and opposition seem to have been the most unrelenting and bitter to those that were best. Christianity came upon the world to raise a universal howl against it from the heathen nations. Progress of all kinds, from the earliest period to the present time, has met this fate. Our Revolution—the most glorious step in man's political history—had its bitter and irreconcilable opponents, who sacrificed their lives and fortunes, under the name of Tories, for the deadly hatred they bore the cause of liberty. Gentlemen opposed to this measure rejoiced as if something unexpected had occurred, when the gentleman from Alabama [Mr. CURRY] spoke against it at the last session. For myself, I was in no way disappointed. If it had not called forth some such opposition, I might have doubted its correctness and final success; but this beginning gives me a full assurance of the end, and that sooner or later the citizen soldier shall again be victorious. There is nothing new to me in the speech of the gentleman, [Mr. CURRY.] Every argument and illustration used by him was urged most eloquently, and more in detail, by Mr. Davis, of South Carolina, in 1832, against the soldiers of the Revolution; indeed, this last speech is a perfect daguerreotype of the first—smaller in its dimensions, and more concise and beautiful in its expressions. If the speech of Mr. Davis was read today to the committee, as much or more would be said, applicable to this bill, as was said by the honorable gentleman from Alabama. These arguments were powerless then, and will fail now.

Mr. Davis denounced the bill of 1832 as a system of immense magnitude, novelty of character, and incalculable amount. No time, he thought,

could be more unfortunate and ill-judged for the introduction of the measure. He described the nation as depressed beyond endurance, and laboring under burdens too heavy long to be borne; he called it a "mammoth bill," extending beyond all former, all describable limits, and beyond all calculable costs, ushered into the House, and pressed forward with haste and zeal; that it was "enormous, wild, and extravagant." He compared it to the herding together of wolves to chase the wounded buffalo, and said that it would saddle upon the country an annual expense of more than six millions; that it was the same system which, in the language of Jefferson, had sent the European laborer supperless to bed; that it would pension such men as General Wade Hampton, and lay the foundations for an aristocratic and privileged order; that it was a sacrifice of the property of one man for the benefit of another, and would teach the people to look to the Government for bread; that it was a system corrupting to individuals and States; and he more than once repeats what we heard from the gentleman from Alabama, that Roman liberty was but a name after the people began to feed from the public granaries.

Mr. Davis also noticed the soldiers of the war of 1812, as the member from Alabama has done the soldiers of subsequent wars; he denies that they ever dreamed of pensions; but he describes the Federal Government as then penniless and insolvent—too feeble to even furnish arms to meet the foe, and sinking upon the wild current of war, like the great Cæsar upon the swollen Tiber, crying to a generous people "Help! help me, or I sink!" The gallant citizens of the West, without arms or equipments furnished by the Government, marched to New Orleans and fought a battle that broke the hearts of tyrants, covered themselves with imperishable glory, and forever established the dignity of freemen and the power of America. These and many other offensive things were urged by the gentleman from South Carolina, in 1832, against the pension system for the revolutionary soldiers. I have noticed them for the purpose of



showing to those who may have thought otherwise, that the weapons used by the gentleman from Alabama, in his assaults upon this bill, are old, broken in former defeats, and in no way dangerous. Gentlemen, by professions of respect and kind feelings for the old soldiers, endeavor to avoid the responsibility of the arguments they make and the votes which they give; but I tell them there is no neutral ground; this is a great battle, and he that is not for us is against us. The tree must be judged of by the fruit, and the fruits of their speeches, if permitted to ripen, are death to the hopes of these old men who now, sinking to the grave under the iron grasp of poverty, cry to the nation "help! help!" as that nation cried to them in 1812, when struggling beneath the paws of the British lion.

There is another fact which makes the speech of the gentleman from Alabama the "unkindest cut of all." If I am not mistaken, he lives upon and represents the glorious battle-field of Talladega; the very soil that produces the bread that he eats contains the bones, and has been made richer by the flesh and blood, of my countrymen, offered up in 1812 as a sacrifice to the common safety and glory, and I can well believe that some poor old helpless women, whose husbands have perished from exposure in those campaigns, now listen most anxiously in their homes of poverty for your response to their petitions. I have learned from the men, the mothers, and wives of that day, the sacrifices and sufferings that attended these great achievements, and the stars of heaven shall not move more steadily in their courses than shall my feeble efforts be given in pressing their claims before the nation.

It is the greatest absurdity to adduce the English pension system as an argument against the one proposed by this bill. They are adverse in every respect. In England the power to pension is in the Crown, and the pensioners are nobles, flatterers, and favorites of the monarch—it is a royal and not national system. This bill proposes to give it to the humble and unfortunate, because of the injuries they have sustained for the public good.

It is too late for gentlemen to talk about the unconstitutionality of the pension system. The legislation in regard to the revolutionary soldiers has established the precedent, and forever fixed the constitutional law upon the subject. It is our daily practice to give pensions for injuries sustained in the service, and the argument for this bill assumes that all who enter your service are more or less injured in health, fortune, and power to labor.

In the language of the report—which I adopt on this occasion—

"Many of these gallant men return with impaired health—some with ruined constitutions; but no matter how they return, with a few fortunate exceptions, they find that while others who have remained at home have advanced, they have retrograded in the race for the good things of this world which render man independent and old age comfortable; their business and families have been neglected, their property depreciated, their patronage is in the hands of others; with them it is almost commencing life a second time at the bottom of the ladder, although their absence from home may have been of short duration. As a general rule, they give the strong days of their manhood to the service of the country, and see as much of actual war in a few campaigns as the soldiers of these vast standing armies do in their lifetime; so that our Government secures the same benefit in the hour of danger, for a very small expense, that

is obtained by other countries at the enormous cost of their perpetual establishments. The burden and sacrifices of a foreign war are, for this cause, unequally divided between the citizens of the Republic, being principally borne by the brave men who, from patriotic motives, thus enter the military service. This view of the subject may be illustrated by supposing the case of two men of equal ability following the same occupation: the one obeys the impulses of patriotism, enters your service, sheds his blood in your cause, advances your standard to victory and glory, bringing peace and renown to the nation; but in most cases, if he returns at all to the bosom of his family it is with less ability to toil, with property and business injured, perhaps lost forever, and for no other reason than because he fought your battles this gallant man goes down to the grave in poverty, and leaves his wife and little ones to misery and want. The other, from accident, necessity, or a greater regard for individual comfort, remains at home, pursues his business, accumulates property, guards his family, and leaves them at his death comfortable and wealthy. No bounty of the Government is likely ever to place these men upon an equality; but a generous people should not let the old soldier die among them, when poverty has been the result of sacrifices for their safety."

Gentlemen have avoided this view of the question; they have neither answered it or tried to answer it. It suits their purposes far better to deal in flowers of rhetoric, general axioms, and abusive epithets.

Gentlemen attack the bill in its details, criticising its provisions with great severity, yet they suggest nothing in lieu of them. Now, I submit to a candid world whether they would not show themselves wiser legislators and better patriots by employing the ability which they manifest to make perfect the imperfect bill which has been reported. For myself, I had neither a hope or expectation of presenting a system perfect in its details. My purpose, when drafting the bill and report, was to present the question to the nation in the fewest words possible, and in the most striking light. I had no hopes of the passage of any bill until the people should speak out upon the subject and order their Representatives to execute their will. I expect amendments, and should other gentlemen fail to offer those I think necessary, I will propose them myself.

I pass now over many minor arguments to answer the statement in regard to the costs. The gentleman from Alabama spoke of a table before him, carefully prepared at the Pension Office, making an estimate of the amount involved in this bill. All the world was left to infer that the gentleman's statement of facts and conclusions rested upon the authority of the pension bureau. I was astonished when the statement was made; for besides feeling confident that it was extravagant and unfounded, I knew that the Military Committee (of which the gentleman from Massachusetts [Mr. BUFFINTON] and I are members) had called upon this Department, through the President, and had received no such answer.

Mr. BUFFINTON assented.

Mr. SAVAGE. I have examined the so-called tables of the gentleman from Alabama, and find them unsigned and unauthorized by any officer of the Government, and hence this famous calculation is wholly without foundation, save the splendid imagination of the orator, or the private information of some individual. But the authority of no Department could sustain the truth of this statement. It is too easy to show that it is a very great error. This calculation assumes that more than eleven million dollars per annum will be required to meet the pensions under this bill. By reference to the message of the President, above



alluded to, in reply to the Military Committee, it will appear that the whole number of officers and men mustered from the militia in the war of 1812, was four hundred and seventy-one thousand six hundred and twenty-two; and the report of Mr. Calhoun, Secretary of War in 1820, shows that the full pay received by officers and men for the whole term of service, amounted to \$12,618,961; and by the report made to Congress, in 1836, by the Third Auditor, it appears that only one hundred and sixty-eight thousand nine hundred and eighty-two of this number were in service for the term of three months. Now, forty-five years since the war, when nine tenths of these gallant men are in the grave, the monstrous absurdity is pressed upon us by gentlemen, that the survivors of this one hundred and sixty-eight thousand will draw nearly as much by way of pension, per annum, as the whole four hundred and seventy one thousand drew for full pay during the whole time of the war.

Again, it appears from the report of Mr. Calhoun, above referred to, that the grand total of officers and men engaged in the revolutionary war amounted to four hundred and ten thousand six hundred and four. The invalids were provided for at an early period; and in 1818, all who served nine months, or to the end of the war of the Revolution, in the Continental line, were provided for. In 1832, pensions were given to all persons, militia, volunteers, and regulars who served for the term of six months in the war of the Revolution. Now, sir, the letter of the present Secretary of the Treasury, addressed to this House, on the 10th of February last, shows the sums drawn from the Government under these various acts, and it shows that under the act of 1818, and the invalid acts of a prior date, the annual appropriations on account of pensions were usually less than one million, and, with the exception of two years, never amounted to two millions. It also shows that after the passage of the act of 1832, against which the gentleman from South Carolina distinguished himself, by wild and extravagant assertions, such as we have heard from gentlemen in regard to this bill, that the appropriations were usually about two million dollars, and never in any year but one, amounting to as much as four millions, which large sum was created by the act relating back to a period anterior to its passage. It also appears by this report, that the whole sum paid by the Government, from 1792 to the present date, by way of pensions, is \$77,372,941 54, an amount not sufficient to support our little Army three years.

Now, it is seen that there is not a great difference between the numbers of the soldiers of the Revolution and those of the war of 1812; and it is known that the benefits of the revolutionary acts were extended to heirs and representatives; so that it is impossible that there can be as many applicants under this bill, which provides only for the soldier and his widow, as under the revolutionary acts. Then, away with this false clamor of \$11,000,000, or even half that sum; it is groundless, and made to draw away the mind from a fair consideration of this question.

Gentlemen assert that there is no legal right resting upon us to confer these pensions; and if claimed as a matter of right, the next step will be to adopt the policy of Great Britain, with her mag-

nificent Chelsea hospital for the relief and support of worn-out and disabled soldiers, and her Greenwich hospital—once a royal palace—as an asylum for seamen who, by age or wounds or other accidents, become unfit for service. This statement is made with a view to disparage Great Britain; but gentlemen are mistaken; they could not have found in English history so high a compliment to that imperial Power. It shows that, no matter how much we may abuse her for pampering her lordly aristocrats, her policy and providence reach down to, and care for, the humble and faithful servant. In other words, the argument amounts to this: that the English soldiers under Pakenham, who invaded our country with the infamous watchwords of "Beauty and Booty," if disabled or in age, shall, because they fought for a king, be happy and comfortable in a royal hospital; but those gallant soldiers who met the storm of war by the side of Jackson, and drove back your invaders, shall be left to perish along the pathway of life, in poverty and want, because they were the citizen-soldiers of a Republic. Is this the country that I am called upon to love, defend, and honor? Shall we follow the advice of gentlemen, and prove to all mankind the truth of that most infamous charge that republics are ungrateful?

The gentleman from Alabama [Mr. CURRY] paid that most faithful and able public officer, the Secretary of the Treasury, a high compliment, and quotes from the Secretary's report to show that the Treasury was empty, and that this was not the time to pass that measure. Far be it from me to accuse the gentleman of sinister motives in passing this high eulogy; but it does become me to examine my side of the question; and before proceeding I will say that I have my fears that neither the gentleman nor the "able Secretary" would ever find a convenient season for the passage of this bill. Sir, if the Treasury is empty, how come it so? the gentleman did not inform us. If he had referred to the letter of this same Secretary, dated 10th of February last, from which I have already quoted, he will find on page 10 thereof, these words and figures: "The balance in the Treasury on the 30th day of June, 1857, was \$46,802,855," and we know that in addition to the accruing revenues, this Congress has already authorized a loan of \$40,000,000, and the Treasury is still bankrupt. The overflowing millions of the last Congress have gone somewhere, but—

"Thou canst not say I did it,"

for the old soldier has not received a dollar of it.

It is asserted that our Government has become disgracefully extravagant; that our expenses have increased out of all reason, and have run up to nearly eighty millions; but how a logician can impute this extravagance to a measure that never had an existence, requires some transcendental sagacity to discover. To recapitulate and brand abuses without showing the cause of the wrongs and the means for the remedy, is no part of statesmanship. The many political maxims quoted by gentlemen do not bear upon this bill; but only prove the truth of that saying of the first Napoleon, that, "If an empire of granite were submitted to the dogmas of political economists, they would grind it to powder." The real economist is a practical man—making liberal, wise, and necessary expenditures—not an eternal fault-finding,



"penny-wise and pound-foolish" objectionist. I yield precedence to no man in my opposition to unnecessary and extravagant appropriations; but the friends of this bill urge its adoption upon the ground that it will save the nation countless millions, by avoiding the otherwise unavoidable necessity of a large standing army in time of peace. The gentleman [Mr. CURRY] will find this view of the question wholly unanswered in the speech of his "illustrious predecessor," Mr. Davis; nor can he now, or any other gentleman, in my opinion, answer it successfully.

Among the opponents of this bill are a certain class of gentlemen upon this floor, who pride themselves upon being called the watch-dogs of the Treasury. Whether or not they deserve the honors they seem ambitious of wearing, I will leave posterity to determine. One thing I do know, that their efforts are always powerless, except against the humble and the poor.

When the Galphins and the Gardiners, the land grants, the ocean mail steamers, and all such princely schemes of public plunder, enter your Halls, if they do not crouch or stand aside for safety, their barking is no more in the pathway of these giants than the breath of a child upon the billows of the ocean. I am willing they shall be the high priests at the altar of economy; they may preach their sermons, and pharisaically thank God that they are not as other men; but I am not willing that the rights and hopes of the old soldier, and the policy of a great nation, shall be a victim to their political notions.

Gentlemen say we have no money, and it is therefore the wrong time to pass this bill. I say, if their allegation be true, that it is the wrong time for the Treasury to be empty. I brought forward this measure at the last Congress, when the Treasury was full to overflowing. The eyes of this nation were turned upon it. A universal argument was made that so much money ought not to be withheld from general circulation. Almost a thousand schemes were discussed or proposed for its distribution. Some of them forced themselves upon the records of this House. A bill to invest \$8,000,000 in railroad stocks was voted for by some very distinguished opponents of pensions. A bill also passed this House, by a vote of 119 to 79, distributing the surplus between the different States; and the old idea of bank deposits was not without its advocates.

Sir, these were the most prominent of the rival schemes for the distribution of the vast accumulation. I opposed them all as being unwise, partial, and unjust to the great mass of the nation. This money was the property of the whole people, and belonged to every man alike—to the poor and the humble, as much as to the rich and the proud; and I was unwilling to sanction any plan for its distribution that did not extend its incidental benefits, as far as possible, to every citizen of the Union. To deposit it with the banks was to give it to the merchants, speculators, politicians, and wealthy men about your cities, whose character and influence would secure accommodations. The mechanics, agriculturists, and people of the interior, would not get a dollar. To invest it in railroad stocks was a scheme for the benefit of the Shylocks and capitalists of the Union by giving them gold from the Treasury at a very high figure for railroad bonds, which they had

purchased much lower. It would have realized to those bondholders great fortunes, while the nation at large would have been in no degree benefited. I was unwilling to distribute it to the States, because I believed it would induce unwise and extravagant legislation for the benefit of the few without regard to the rights of the many. I was unwilling for this great fund to be scattered abroad, unless, like the dews of heaven, it should fall with its refreshing power upon every citizen of the Union, whether rich or poor, humble or distinguished, living in a great city or the remote country. I expected by this bill to accomplish three things:

1. To reward the old soldier for the patriotism he has displayed and the injuries sustained in your service.

2. By the honor conferred upon old age, to encourage an emulous spirit in the bosoms of our youth that will forever furnish citizen soldiers to meet the exigencies of war, and thus avoid that most to be dreaded of all necessities, a standing army.

3. A distribution and expenditure of the public revenue which will, to a greater extent than any other plan, confer its incidental benefits upon all sections and all classes.

I have neither time nor space to examine our vast expenditures; but to illustrate this view of the argument, I will state a few prominent items as a general standard.

I know that it is very difficult for the Government, in making expenditures, to confer equal benefits upon all sections and upon all classes; but I hold that it is a duty to approximate as near thereto as possible, and never, without some great necessity, to adopt measures or make expenditures which confer benefits upon one section or one class to the exclusion of others. It requires no argument to prove that if all the revenue is collected in one class of States and spent in another, or from one class of men and paid to another, that the latter will become rich and the former poor; and hence it follows that almost as much partiality and injustice may exist in disbursing as in collecting the public revenue. It appears from Secretary Cobb's report, from which I have already quoted, that the total amount appropriated by the Government since 1789, is \$1,975,935,176 97, which consists of the following items:

Civil list.....	\$119,081,454 81
Foreign intercourse, including awards.....	82,853,654 34
Miscellaneous.....	195,221,713 17
Military service.....	503,233,048 33
Revolutionary and other pensions.....	77,372,941 54
Indian department, including Chickasaw fund.....	79,434,170 16
Naval establishment.....	320,835,794 16
Appropriations, exclusive of public debt....	1,378,032,776 51
Public debt.....	597,902,400 46
Total.....	1,975,935,176 97
Amount carried to surplus fund.....	41,025,056 26

Now, it is seen that nearly half of the whole amount collected for all purposes has been spent upon our little Army and Navy, and that our pensioners have received less than we have paid the Indians.

It appears from this same report that our expenditures for the year ending June, 1857, amounted to \$71,274,587 83, and it is well-grounded opinion, that for the last year they amounted to over eighty millions. The estimates for the present year amount to \$74,065,896 99. These vast sums



are collected from all sections, and every citizen, and a partial expenditure inflicts the greatest injustice. The large items for sustaining the Army and Navy are expended upon the borders and along the sea-board, and in the great cities. The interior agricultural people are refreshed by this golden shower to a very slight extent. And so far as I can see, it is a misfortune without a remedy; but it is not so with some other items that I will mention.

Congress has heretofore appropriated the sum of \$21,815,103 67, for roads, rivers, and harbors; which expenditures are local and partial in every respect—a mere draft upon the Treasury for the benefit of some particular city or community; and I am well informed that some gentlemen, quite prominent in this system of public plunder, have distinguished themselves as opponents of this bill. Congress has also expended much treasure in fortifying our great cities and sea-port towns. Since the year 1832, the sum of \$24,584,375 has been voted for this purpose; and of this sum, the last Congress voted \$5,684,375. To fortify our cities, may have been wise at the time this system was commenced; for then the nation was weak, and the communication with the interior slow. Now, railroads extend to every section, and the iron horse far outstrips in speed the ships upon the ocean. I hold that fortifications are, at best, a very poor substitute for the want of men. History proves them to have been more commonly the instruments of domestic tyranny than of national defense. The boasted San Juan de Ulloa, and Perote, of Mexico, have often been the prisons of her own citizens, but were as nothing in the pathway of our invasion.

Now, sir, instead of annually pouring out these large sums in our cities, in building fortifications that may never be assaulted, I propose to abandon the system and distribute the money to every section of the country, to assist in bringing up gallant men, who shall be ready and willing, when the haughty foe shall threaten, to fly with railroad speed, and stand around the beleaguered city, a wall of living valor, more to be relied on and more honorable than cold stones, though piled upon each other as high as the tower of Babel.

The old soldier is found everywhere; but, perhaps, most often in the interior agricultural regions, where public expenditures, as now made, never reach. Perhaps the very community that taught him to toil, and sent him to fight your battles in the strength of his youth, received him back again with health impaired or ruined habits. The Government, when it took this man from toil, injured his friends and neighbors; and now I propose to pay the debt by giving him ninety-six dollars per annum; and this is a gift, also, to a great extent; to that community wherein the soldier lives, for he must spend it to educate his children, for bread to eat, to pay the merchant, the doctor, and mechanic. The money, unlike the vast sums poured out upon your great cities for your Army and Navy, your printing, fortifications, or the collection of the public revenue, would be principally given to the interior agricultural regions, and become a great educational and agricultural fund to aid and strengthen these men of humble fortune who are the real strength and glory of every land; for it is they who fill your workshops, cultivate your fields, raise and educate the

children who fight your battles, and sustain the freedom of your Government at the ballot-box. This system is not only great in its accomplishments, but equal to all men in its benefits.

The Secretary of the Treasury was lauded in the public press some few months after the inauguration, because it was said that the gentleman, for the purpose of aiding the mercantile world to meet the pressure of hard times, had paid off quite a large portion of the public debt, when the same had many years yet to run. It appears, from the Secretary's financial report, that he paid the sum of \$688,977 78 by way of premium upon these debts. This operation was for the benefit of the merchants, bankers, and brokers; and, in my opinion, was equal to one fourth the annual cost of this bill. With such facts before them, the friends of the Secretary ought not to talk of the extravagance of this bill.

It may be safely said that the Army and Navy annually cost fifteen times as much as the pensions under this bill.

I exhibited to this House, at the last session, calculations of Professor Tucker and Mr. De Bow, showing that in all probability less than seventeen thousand men entitled by the bill were then surviving—requiring about a million and a half per annum to pension them. The opinions of these gentlemen are founded upon the known value of human life, and the opponents of the bill have not dared to controvert their correctness.

Every people, to maintain their independence, must have some system to guard against domestic usurpation and foreign war. The object of this bill is to avoid the European system. Vast armies there surround the thrones of princes, crushing the spirit of liberty, and destroying the substance of the people by the most ruinous and oppressive taxation. England maintains, in time of peace, about one hundred and fifty thousand; France, in 1854, had on foot four hundred and one thousand two hundred and forty-seven; Russia, in 1855, had eight hundred thousand soldiers. We have an army, by the report of Secretary Floyd to the present Congress, of seventeen thousand four hundred and ninety-eight. For the last year it cost us largely over twenty million dollars. This year the Secretary estimates for \$18,010,190 28, which we know is liable to be increased by a deficiency bill at the next Congress; from which it appears that we pay over a million dollars for each thousand men, or more than one thousand dollars per man; so that, if we adopt the European system, and raise our Army to equal that of Great Britain, it would cost annually \$150,000,000; if we rival France, over four hundred million dollars; and to equal Russia, more than eight hundred million dollars. When this system is adopted, the freedom of the people is at an end. Our little Mexican war produced five or six ambitious generals, each of whom acted as if he had a legal right to the Presidency. Discourage the citizen soldier, increase your standing Army; let a foreign war come that shall try the strength of the nation; and, unless the commander of your conquering legions shall be a second Washington, your Congress will be driven hence, your Constitution trampled under foot, and the people will become the victim and inheritance of a usurper and his descendants. Gentlemen cannot avoid it. The question upon this bill is simply,



will you have a pension list or a standing army? At the last session, Congress was asked to grant five additional regiments to the regular establishment; thereby increasing, for all time, our annual expenditures more than five million dollars. Congress refused; and if the request had been granted, past experience authorizes us to say, that if a further increase had not been asked during this Administration, it would have been demanded at the beginning of the next. Gentlemen who talk about the extravagance of this bill vote to increase the Army without hesitation. The systems are opposed to each other, and gentlemen are entitled to their opinions. The bill proposes to secure to the nation a reliance upon the citizen for military service, as the cheapest, most honorable, and least dangerous system for a free people. If we reject it, we must adopt the alternative, and expend vast sums to create a regular establishment, equal to national defense, thus devoting many of our citizens and much money to military purposes forever.

The principle of pensioning for military service has been approved by the distinguished men of the United States since 1818. It was approved by

General Washington in 1780, when Congress, at his urgent request, passed a resolution giving to the officers half pay for life, and which he then described as necessary to prevent a dissolution of the army. Resting upon these high authorities, I feel confident that the passage of this bill will establish a military policy, which alone can secure the nation against the dangers of foreign war and domestic usurpation.

As to the soldiers of subsequent wars, I cannot consent to pension them now. If, hereafter, when they have grown old, and the Government is in the hands of their children, they should be honored and held up to the nation in their declining years as examples for imitation, it would be in accordance with the policy which I desire to see established. But these old men of 1812 are the fathers of the Republic—the victors in the second war of independence. They are rapidly sinking to the grave, and must be paid now or never. It is no argument to say that the Treasury is empty. The nation which they defended in the days of their youth I hope may live forever, and yet become the most glorious and powerful on the face of the globe.